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LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In reference to my letter ROY/407/12.95/A dated today, concerning the Eritrean military operation against the Yemeni island of Hanish AlKubra, I enclose herewith an official communiqué issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, and request that this be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdalla S. AL-ASHTAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Communiqué issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen

Undoubtedly, the Security Council has been following the regrettable developments arising from the hostile intentions harboured by the State of Eritrea towards the Republic of Yemen, which emerged when the Eritrean authorities, on 11 November 1995, issued a warning to the Yemeni citizens and the military guard stationed on the Yemeni island of Greater Hanish to leave the island and halt work on one of the investment projects being carried out by one of the companies on the island.

It was possible for the Republic of Yemen to raise the problem at all levels and via all regional and international organizations, because the Yemeni islands concerning which Eritrea sought to stir up a dispute are of concern not only to Yemen but also to all States, since they are located on the international navigation channel in the Red Sea. Nevertheless, the Republic of Yemen preferred to contain the situation and to resolve the problem through direct negotiation between the two neighbouring countries, in affirmation of the concern of the Republic of Yemen for its relations with its neighbour Eritrea and its sincere wish to resolve any disputes about its maritime boundary with Eritrea through peaceful dialogue and negotiation, in accordance with international laws and instruments. With that end in view, the Yemeni Government made contact with the highest governmental levels in Eritrea, as a result of which meetings were convened in Sana'a and Asmara, the most recent being the meeting held at Asmara on 7 December 1995 and chaired by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries, at which the Republic of Yemen once again affirmed its readiness for dialogue and the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Eritrea laying down the bases of bilateral negotiation on the maritime boundary and providing for the possibility of resort to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice. This position clearly reflects the good intentions of the Republic of Yemen and its constant concern to protect the distinguished historical relations between the two countries and to eradicate the anarchy that arose from the unexpected allegations of the Eritrean Government with regard to the Yemeni islands. Agreement was reached at those meetings that any dispute was to be contained and that the dialogue was to be continued after the blessed month of Ramadan.

However, regrettably, the Republic of Yemen was suddenly confronted by Eritrea's launching of its blatant attack on Friday, 15 December 1995, on the Yemeni island of Hanish, in spite of the fact that Yemen had at the time backed and supported Eritrea's attainment of its independence and had devoted its territory and its territorial waters to its struggle, including these islands that Eritrea is today attacking.

Immediately following this attack, the Republic of Yemen expressed its regret and severe condemnation of Eritrea's involvement in this premeditated aggression against Yemeni territory, violation of Yemeni territorial waters and

the threat to security and stability and to international navigation in the Red Sea. It also affirmed its legitimate right to defend its sovereignty over its territory and its territorial waters and to repulse any attack on them. The Eritrean Government bears the responsibility for the consequences of this blatant aggression, which is aimed at impairing the security and stability of the region, which constitutes an inseparable part of the world.
